Poster: Communication strategies for the school nurse mentor: A pilot training program

Amy Hotler DNP, RN, LSN, APHN-BC
ahotler@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.otterbein.edu/stu_doc

Part of the Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons, Health and Medical Administration Commons, Health Services Administration Commons, Nursing Administration Commons, and the Public Health and Community Nursing Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.otterbein.edu/stu_doc/30

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research & Creative Work at Digital Commons @ Otterbein. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Otterbein. For more information, please contact shickey@otterbein.edu.
New School Nurses: Safe confidence in their new role as mentors and have not received formalized training for the role. Mentors have widespread support among many disciplines for the impact on improved job satisfaction, decreased turnover, and decreased costs. Ongoing support through mentorship is critical to nurses transitioning to a new role and nurse mentors must be prepared for the role. Unfortunately, literature describing effective training programs for mentors is scarce, though some studies have reported an increase in confidence among mentors after training, especially for topics in communication skills.

Theoretical Framework: Bandura: Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura, experienced school nurses who believe they can succeed in their new role as mentors after training, especially for topics in communication skills, are more likely to develop self-efficacy in the new role. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to perform tasks and achieve goals. It is a critical component of successful mentorship, as mentors who believe they can succeed in their new role are more likely to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be effective mentors. Self-efficacy leads to success. While promoting self-efficacy through training is important, creating a system of supports for the school nurse mentor is also key. Opportunities to meet with peers and administrators can help mentors develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be effective mentors. The majority of participants identified informal mentoring experience, which is assumed to be less dependent on documentation of protected privacy. Participants may have not had opportunity to develop growth plans throughout their mentoring careers. It could be argued that confidence in mentoring does not mean a school nurse mentor will be competent in mentoring. High self-efficacy leads to success. While promoting self-efficacy through training is important, creating a system of supports for the school nurse mentor is also key. Opportunities to meet as a group to discuss challenges and provide peer and administrative encouragement are important elements to a school mentorship program.

Communication Strategies for the School Nurse Mentor: A Pilot Study

Amy Hotler, MSN, RN, APHN-BC

School nursing is a specialized autonomous practice of nursing that involves working with students, families, educators, and community members to help students succeed in school. Because the role is broad in scope, involving knowledge of school law, health promotion, interdisciplinary teamwork and community health, helping a nurse assimilate to the new role can be challenging. Registered nurses (RN) enter the school health field with various backgrounds including critical care, medical-surgical and psychiatric nursing to name a few. In fact, because of the scope of school nursing, a diverse work experience is preferred. School nurses need to be able to care for both adults and pediatric populations as they see staff members for various medical issues, and care for students in need of mental health counseling, chronic disease management and/or health promotion (Board et al., 2011). Health disparities among racial groups and those in poverty require the nurse to be well versed in strategies to overcome many barriers to student learning resulting from poor health care such as uncorrected asthma, diabetes, or uncorrected vision or hearing problems. Providing an environment where nurses can practice mentoring skills in a safe environment and receive constructive feedback should lead to mastery. Using encouragement as a source of social inclusion and support fosters networking among nurse mentors through group meetings is another way to maximize self-efficacy among new nurse mentors.

Important Components of Mentor Training: Teaching, especially in communication strategies, Safe environment to practice skills, and Training with mentor colleagues, improve mentoring. An educational module with an emphasis on communication skills for the school nurse mentor was developed using Bandura's sources of self-efficacy and presented to school nurse mentors in an online format. Mentor perceived confidence was measured in a pre/post-questionnaire. The purpose of this DNP project was to develop a training module for school nurse mentors and determine how the program affected their confidence in mentoring new school nurses. The literature suggests communication is an important component of mentor training programs and Bandura suggests boosting mentor self-efficacy will improve mentoring. An educational module with an emphasis on communication skills for the school nurse mentor was developed using Bandura's sources of self-efficacy and presented to school nurse mentors in an online format. Mentor perceived confidence was measured in a pre/post-questionnaire.